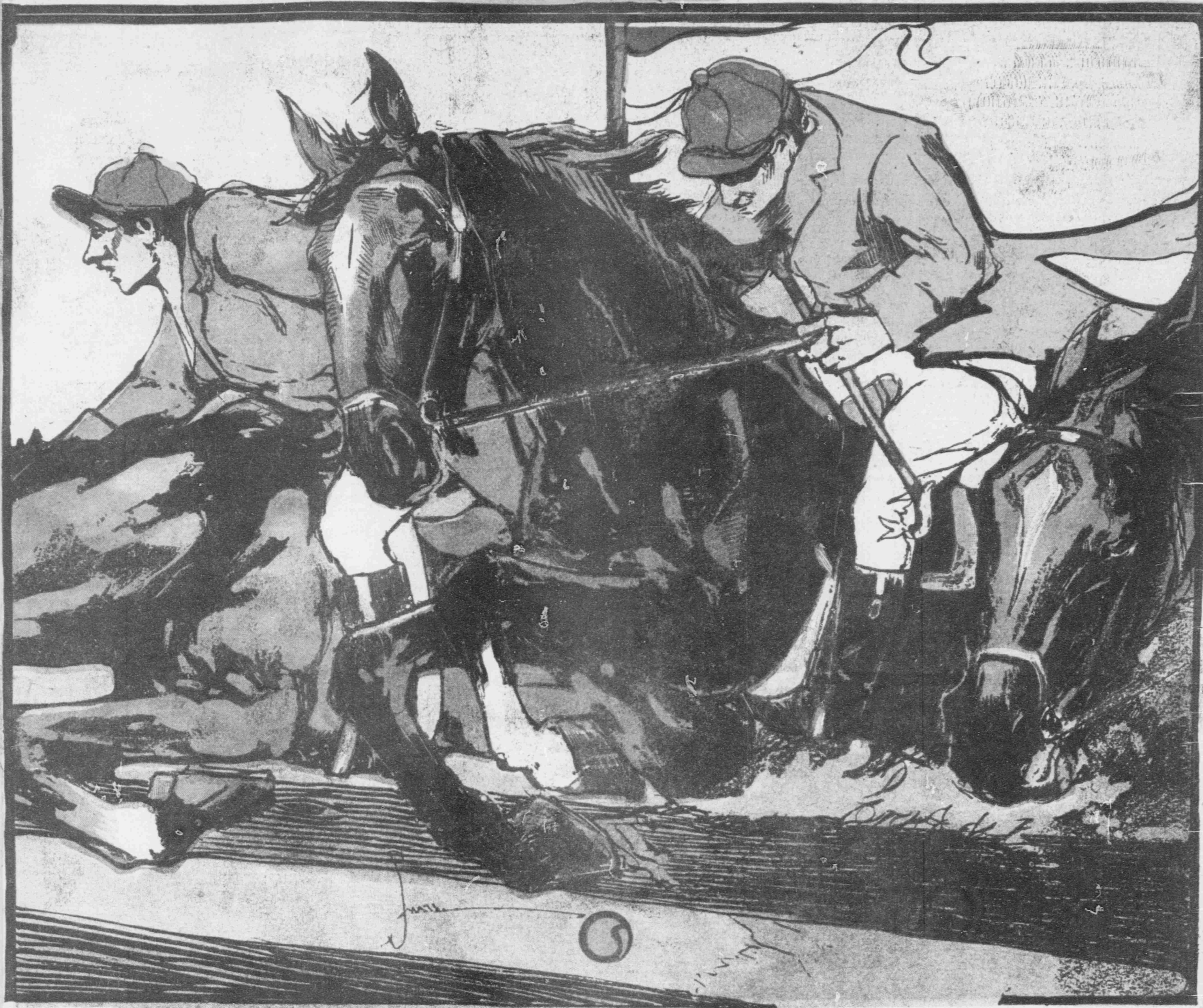


AMERICA'S LATEST SPORTING FAD

The MOST DANGEROUS on the List



Washington Welcomes Next Thursday the Greatest Dare-Devil "Gentlemen Jockeys" in the Country for the Big Steeplechase Series at Benning, Where the Past Glories of Cedarhurst Will Be Revived.

WHEN the first race of the United Hunts meeting is sent away at the Benning track next Thursday, society folk from nearly all of the great cities of the Eastern States will have seats in the grandstand and on the piazza of the Jockey Club. For though the United Hunts Association was formed something over a year ago by a number of the best sportsmen in the country, with Perry Belmont at their head, wholly with the idea of creating a greater interest in that sport of sports, steeplechasing, and incidentally in cross-country riding, society "seen its duty and done it noble." That element in society which "goes in for" sports was aided and abetted by the other larger element which merely likes to be "smart," and, collectively, society, spelled with a big "S," took the meeting of the United Hunts to its bosom.

The first meeting of the United

Hunts was held at Morris Park last fall. The races were on at Jamaica track at the time and the racing element, that part of it which makes it a business rather than a pastime, although it took an interest in the steeplechase and flat races held under the auspices of the hunt clubs, also took very much the same kind of interest that the regular "fan" takes in college baseball games. Consequently that element remained faithful to the Jamaica track and it was left for society to patronize the "Hunts" meeting, which it did. And society will undoubtedly continue to do so this year.

A Dangerous Sport.

It is a dangerous sport that society has put its seal of approval upon, the most dangerous of all sports. Football with its nineteen fatalities and two hundred-odd serious injuries of a year ago pales into insignificance beside it. Even the dangers of automobilism as ex-

emplified by the Vanderbilt cup races of recent date, and that of polo, do not class up with the danger of steeplechasing. But it is a great sport, a gentleman's sport, for it was originated by gentlemen years ago and has reached its highest development under their guidance. And in the last analysis it is the danger of a sport which lends the greatest amount of interest to it. Danger is always interesting. Nerve and skill, daring and the dash which sends a tiring horse along over the jumps to a driving finish, appeal to all men and to women in spite of themselves. You couldn't pay a crowd of thousands to sit and watch a chess game, yet crowds amounting to many thousands will journey out to Benning and pay their money to see these steeplechases. The meeting of the United Hunts promises to be a great success this year. No better place than Washington could have been selected for the meeting, for it lies in the very center of the hunting country, joining the North and the South. Besides this the Benning track is ideal for steeplechasing. The list of entries includes some of the best jumping horses in the country. In fact, there were twenty-eight entries for the Capital Steeplechase, which is to be run on the opening day. The horses will be ridden by the most skillful and daring gentlemen jockeys in the country. Among the hunt clubs which will

be represented and which are well known throughout the country, are the Chevy Chase Hunt, the Essex County Hunt, the Green Spring Valley Hunt, the Westchester Hunt, the Middlesex Hunt, the Warrenton Hunt, the Meadow Brook Hunt, the Orange County Hunt, the Crow Wing Hunt, the Genesee Valley Hunt, and the Aiken Hunt. This is by no means a complete list of the hunts which are interested in the meeting. Naturally Virginia and Maryland will have their full quota of horses and riders in the steeplechases. The greatest amount of interest has been manifested by the owners of steeplechasing horses in the Old Dominion since it became known that the meeting would be held in Washington. Courtland Smith, of the Cameron Run Hunt, who has a long string of jumpers; Dick Wallace, Dion Kerr, Lee Evans, of the Warrenton Hunt; Charles Hooff, the Portners, Gwynne Tompkins, and many other men well known in the hunting circles of Virginia, will not only enter horses, but will ride. Dion Kerr will enter Dunseverrick from the Antrim Stock Farms in Warrenton. Mr. Kerr won a number of races with this horse in the North during the past summer. Other good horses that will run are Nixt Blanche, Hylas, Jimmie Lane, Pure Pepper, Game Cock, Neponset, Oloroso, and Bound Brook. The local hunt club, Chevy Chase,

will have its representatives in the steeplechases. Charles Johnson, who will be M. E. H. of the club this year, will have part in the races. Interest in cross-country riding at Chevy Chase has fallen off to some extent in the last year or two, and it is expected that the meeting of the United Hunts held here will help to bring about a renewal of that interest. If so, one of the results which the founders of the association hoped for will have been accomplished. At present Mr. Johnson, assisted by Chester Kerr, is getting together a pack, and it is hoped that regular runs will be held over the old hunting country of the club. It is only natural that a revival of interest in steeplechasing should be the work of the hunt clubs, for steeplechasing first originated in the hunting field. It has been said that steeplechasing of a kind existed as far back as the days of James the First of England, and that races were held at New Market. But it is improbable that these early attempts at jumping races were other than races in the hunting field or wild goose chases. But putting aside these hunting matches and wild goose chases, steeplechasing may properly be said to have originated in Ireland when two gentlemen who particularly fancied their horses made a match for an eight-mile race across a good stiff country. This was

back in 1752, and ever since then steeplechasing has found favor in the Emerald Isle. The father of steeplechasing as it is known today in England was Thomas Coleman, who was a rider and trainer back in the early eighties. And yet the suggestion that he arrange cross-country races came to him from a number of officers of the Life Guards who were in and about St. Albans. The first organized steeplechase took place over a course at St. Albans in 1830, and the first of the Grand Military steeplechases, which have become famous in England, was held at Northampton in 1840.

Army Officers Will Ride.

A feature of the United Hunts meeting will be the Grand Military steeplechase, patterned after the same event in England. It is open to members of the service in the United States and the horses must be ridden by their owners in military uniform. Regular army officers, cadets from West Point, and officers of such troops as Squadron A of New York, will take part. Officers of high rank in the army have approved this military steeplechase, considering it an excellent thing to create an interest in such sport in the service. A year ago at Morris Park there were but four entries in this event, three from Squadron A of New York, and one from the regular army. The latter

was Lieut. L. S. Martin, of the Twentieth Cavalry. Though Mr. Martin rode a good race he finished last. This was largely due to the fact that his horse, Dominon, was a green steeplechaser and had little speed compared to other entries. As it was Dominon would have finished third had not Mr. Martin mistaken the finish and eased up before he crossed the line, allowing his third opponent to finish before him in the drive. This year the entry list for the Grand Military will be much larger than a year ago, and a great deal of interest has been evinced by the army in general. The selection of the stewards for the meeting has been happy. Samuel Ross, of Washington; Joseph E. Widener, the well-known Philadelphia patron of the turf; E. C. La Montagne, of New York, have been chosen and their names are enough to insure good management of the steeplechases.

An Ugly Jump.

An innovation in the jumps was tried last year and the same jumps will probably be used again at Benning. Instead of the water jump a stone wall of formidable proportions was used, and instead of the Liverpools, post and rail fences. These jumps proved a great success, though the stone wall was

(Continued on Fourth Page)